CLAIMS

1. Method of managing a communication network comprising on the one hand a sub-network consisting of communication nodes interconnected by links conveying digital signals, and on the other hand several hosts able to exchange data by means of this sub-network, said method being characterised in that, in order to actuate, from any first node in the network, any host in the network by means of operating commands transmitted by an appropriate interface (103, 116) attached to a second node in the network to which said host is connected,

- a search signal containing information representing the technical features of the host to be actuated is transmitted from said first node in the direction of the nodes in the network including the first node,

- a candidate host is identified, which may be the host to be actuated on the basis of compatibility between the technical features of this candidate host and the technical features indicated in the search signal,

- this host candidate is started up by means of a control interface (103, 116) attached to the node to which said candidate host is connected, and

- if this candidate host proves not to be the host to be actuated, a search signal is transmitted once again in order to continue the search, whereas, if this host does indeed prove to be the host to be actuated, operating commands are sent to it by means of said control interface (103, 116), which also interrupts the search.

2. Method of managing a communication network according to Claim 1, characterised in that said network comprises at least one host able to exchange analogue signals by means of a data interface (102) and being able to be controlled by means of a control interface (116), and in that certain technical features useful for being able to control this at least one host are obtained by analysing the technical features of said data interface (102).

3. Method of managing a communication network, characterised in that, in order to put two hosts in the network in communication, a method according to Claim 1 or Claim 2 is implemented for at least one of said two hosts.

4. Method of managing a communication network according to Claim 3, characterised in that said two hosts are connected to the same node in said sub-network.

5. Method of determining technical features in a communication network comprising on the one hand a sub-network consisting of communication nodes interconnected by links conveying digital signals, and on the other hand several hosts able to exchange data by means of this sub-network, at least one host amongst said hosts being able to exchange analogue signals by means of a data interface (102) and being able to be controlled by means of a control interface (116), said method being characterised in that certain technical features useful for being able to control this at least one host are obtained by analysing the technical features of said data interface (102).

6. Communication node intended to form part of a communication network comprising on the one hand a sub-network consisting of communication nodes interconnected by links conveying digital signals, and on the other hand several hosts able to exchange data by means of this sub-network, said node being characterised in that it comprises

- at least one data interface (102) for the possible connection of a host able to exchange analogue signals,
- at least one control interface (116) able to transmit operating commands to such a host, and
- a unit (93) supplying said control interface (116) from signals representing these operating commands and received by said unit (93) from other nodes.

7. Communication node intended to form part of a communication network comprising on the one hand a sub-network consisting of communication nodes interconnected by links conveying digital signals, and on the other hand several hosts able to exchange data by means of this sub-network, said node being characterised in that it has at least one receiver (115) able to receive operating commands intended for any host in the network, said receiver (115) supplying a unit (93) able to produce signals representing these operating commands and being able to be transmitted to other nodes.

able to receive operating commands intended for any host in the network, said receiver (115) supplying a unit (93) able to produce signals representing these operating commands and being able to be transmitted to other nodes.

8. Data processing apparatus, characterised in that it has a communication node according to Claim 6 or Claim 7.

9. Communication network, characterised in that it comprises at least one communication node according to Claim 6 or Claim 7.

10. Communication network according to Claim 9, characterised in that said data represent audio-visual information.

11. Data storage means which can be read by a computer or a microprocessor storing instruction of a computer program, characterised in that it makes it possible to implement a method according to any one of Claims 1 to 5.

12. Data storage means which is removable, partially or totally, and which can be read by a computer and/or a microprocessor storing instructions of a computer program, characterised in that it makes it possible to implement a method according to any one of Claims 1 to 5.